



Minister's Report

May 5, 2021

Monthly Worship Theme: Story

Opening Words: ** Praise Song for the Day (excerpt) by Elizabeth Alexander

	Ministerial Observations	Ministerial Wonderings	Ministerial Flags	Ministerial Celebrations
Governance and Leadership	RPG will be drafting safety criteria for Fall reopening, including: draft plans for Fall RE programming and hybrid worship.	We will need clear guidance over the next several months, as we move into the “new normal;” RPG, the board and minister will need to work closely together during this uncertain time.	The Finance Committee has had a strong impact on committees and individuals with its “road show.” Many people have commented on the quality of the presentation and its “wake-up call” for FPB.	The Nominating Committee has completed its 2021 work, with nominations for two new board members, two new nominating committee members, a new moderator, and an alternate moderator.
Staff	Ebiere has been doing a great job so far and is appreciating the understanding of the community as she continues to learn all aspects of this role.	Laci has been working with the RE Committee to expand outdoor gatherings, Spring and Summer and draft a variety of options for Fall RE programming.	May 9 th will be the last service Jud will lead as our intern minister. We'll say goodbye to him on June 6 th , with a post-service outdoor gathering.	The parish administrator's office is getting a much-needed facelift! Once it's completed, Ebiere will begin working onsite most days.

Worship, Ritual and Ceremony	We held a child dedication outdoors on April 10 th for Delilah Terry; her parents, Sean and Molly, are considering FPB membership.	The Worship Committee is considering offering an in-person, BYO chair and refreshments, coffee hour option, starting mid-May, depending on RPG approval. Zoom coffee hour will still be offered.	The Worship team met with the Fenway group and received a quote to improve our equipment and wiring, in order to provide high-quality hybrid worship this Fall. Work should go forward in June-July.	Rev. Lisa hosted a candlelight vigil onsite at FPB after the verdict in the Derek Chauvin trial, for all those BIPOC killed by police who have not received justice.
Congregational Life and Spiritual Development	We officially welcomed only one new member this year, though we have had many visitors and inquiries about membership. Membership will likely pick up again once we're back in person.	We are hoping to have an in-person, outdoor, end-of-year congregational event on Sunday, June 6 th after the service, if approved by the RPG.	Both our worship and welcoming committees need to be strengthened, due to "pandemic weariness." Pastoral Care is seeking new members as well.	We will have a "Flower Celebration" community event on Saturday, May 22 nd , including the flower ceremony ritual in the sanctuary.
Community Engagement and Social Justice	IJC is working on ways to support our community partners – La Colaborativa, Centro Presente and BIJAN – with an educational panel on current immigration issues being planned.	Where are we with the solar panels proposal? Has Climate Justice come to any resolution?	RJAC has been working on building stronger, more authentic relationships with local organizations led by BIPOC. This work will be supported by distribution of grant funds.	The RJAC, IJC and Climate Justice committees have agreed to split the Cedar Tree fund grant between Ujima and ACE (Alternatives for Community and Environment.)
Finance and Administration	Steve P-O and Rev Lisa met with Keith Morgan about historic preservation	Debba Andree and Rev. Lisa met with the FP Lexington auction chair to	The budget process seems to be moving along smoothly,	The finance committee is receiving well-deserved

	grants to support the ongoing needs of our building.	learn best practices and “insider tips.” Next step: finalize auction team; key player: tech “guru.”	with many congregation members participating.	kudos for its budget presentations.
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**** Praise Song for the Day** (Elizabeth Alexander)

A Poem for Barack Obama’s Presidential Inauguration

Each day we go about our business,
walking past each other, catching each other’s
eyes or not, about to speak or speaking.

All about us is noise. All about us is
noise and bramble, thorn and din, each
one of our ancestors on our tongues.

Someone is stitching up a hem, darning
a hole in a uniform, patching a tire,
repairing the things in need of repair.

Someone is trying to make music somewhere,
with a pair of wooden spoons on an oil drum,
with cello, boom box, harmonica, voice.

A woman and her son wait for the bus.
A farmer considers the changing sky.

A teacher says, *Take out your pencils. Begin.*

We encounter each other in words, words
spiny or smooth, whispered or declaimed,
words to consider, reconsider.

We cross dirt roads and highways that mark
the will of some one and then others, who said
I need to see what's on the other side.

I know there's something better down the road.
We need to find a place where we are safe.
We walk into that which we cannot yet see.

Say it plain: that many have died for this day.
Sing the names of the dead who brought us here,
who laid the train tracks, raised the bridges,

picked the cotton and the lettuce, built
brick by brick the glittering edifices
they would then keep clean and work inside of.

Praise song for struggle, praise song for the day.
Praise song for every hand-lettered sign,
the figuring-it-out at kitchen tables.

Some live by *love thy neighbor as thyself*,
others by first do no harm or take no more

than you need. What if the mightiest word is love?

Love beyond marital, filial, national,
love that casts a widening pool of light,
love with no need to pre-empt grievance.

In today's sharp sparkle, this winter air,
any thing can be made, any sentence begun.
On the brink, on the brim, on the cusp,

praise song for walking forward in that light.